

ABSOLUTE BATMAN



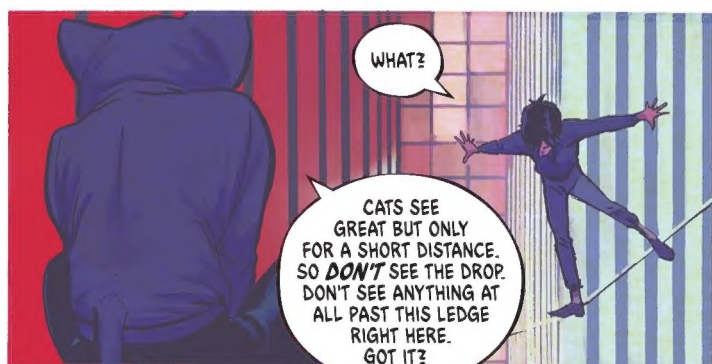
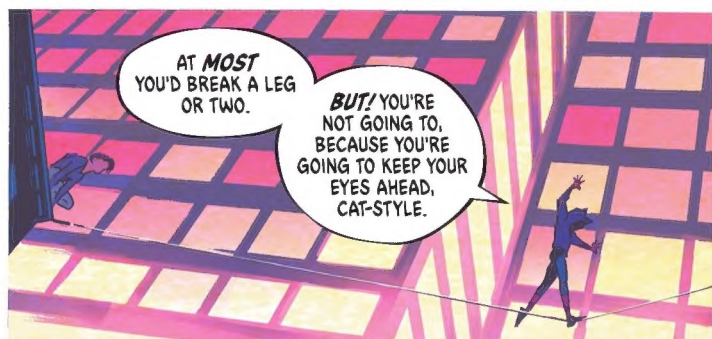
ALL IN

13+
TEEN 3



SNYDER
DRAGOTTA
MARTIN

DRAGOTTA.





**ABSOLUTE
BATMAN**

"THE ZOO"

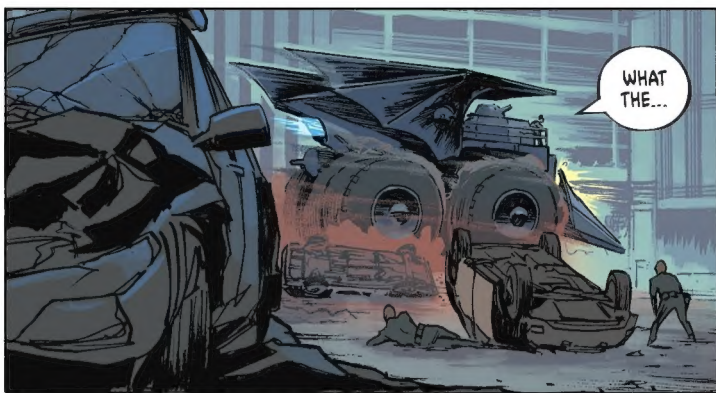
PART THREE

**WRITER: SCOTT SNYDER • ARTIST: NICK DRAGOTTA
COLORIST: FRANK MARTIN • LETTERER: CLAYTON COWLES**

**COVER: DRAGOTTA & MARTIN • VARIANT COVERS: BECKY CLOONAN, GABRIELE DELL'OTTO,
RILEY ROSSMO & IVAN PLASCENCIA, and STEVAN SUBIC • ASSOCIATE EDITOR: SABRINA FUTCH
EDITOR: KATIE KUBERT • EXECUTIVE EDITOR: CHRIS CONROY • BATMAN CREATED BY BOB KANE WITH BILL FINGER**



I've spent more than four decades cultivating a life of stealth.



WHAT THE...



I have over twenty passports, twice as many identities.

I pride myself on being no one. The vague shape of a man sitting across from you on the train. An outline, a charcoal sketch.

Forty years of creating a life in the shadows...

...all to find myself driving down Broadway on the hood of a giant, bat-themed dump truck. And it suddenly occurs to me...

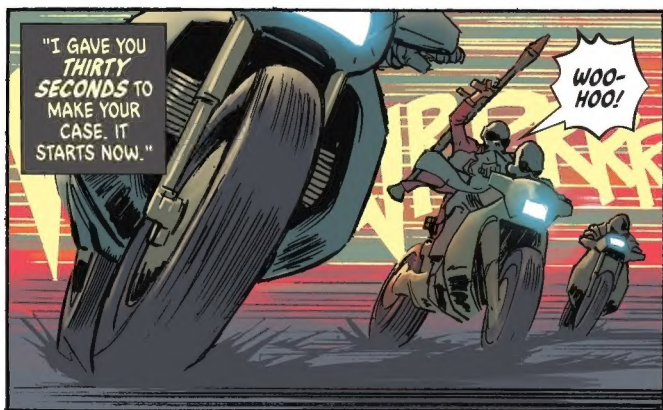


...I may actually hate Batman.

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU **DOING?!** YOU CAN'T JUST **PLOW** STRAIGHT THROUGH THE CITY! THEY'LL OVERTAKE US IN NO TIME!



THEN YOU BETTER TALK FAST.



"I GAVE YOU **THIRTY SECONDS** TO MAKE YOUR CASE. IT STARTS NOW."

WOO-HOO!



TAT-TAT-TAT



PING
IN MY FIELD, THERE ARE RUMORS OF A MAN CALLED THE **BLACK MASK!**
PING



TORCH THEM!

TA TA TA
TA TA TA

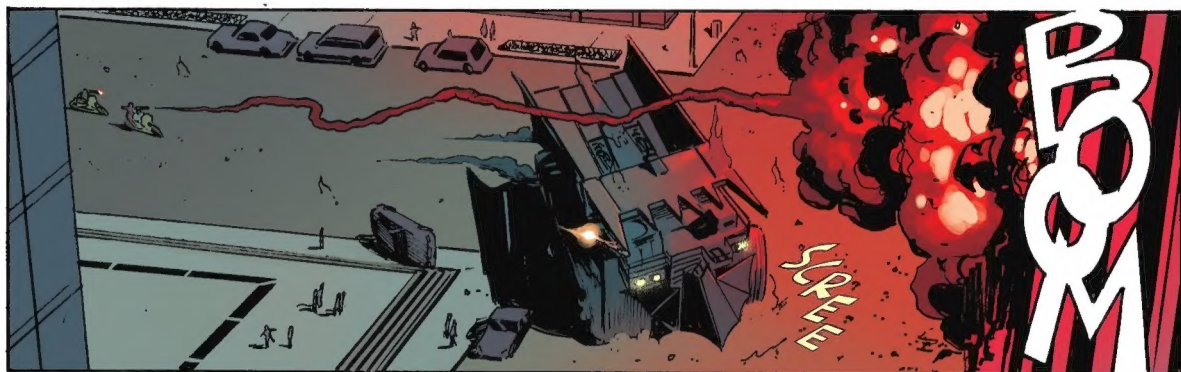


HE'S THE LEADER OF A SECRET PARAMILITARY GROUP THAT SERVES SOME OF THE MOST POWERFUL PEOPLE ON THE PLANET. DESTABILIZING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, VIOLENT DISRUPTION...

...I BELIEVE THAT *ROMAN SIONIS*, THE LEADER OF THE PARTY ANIMALS, MAY BE THE BLACK MASK!

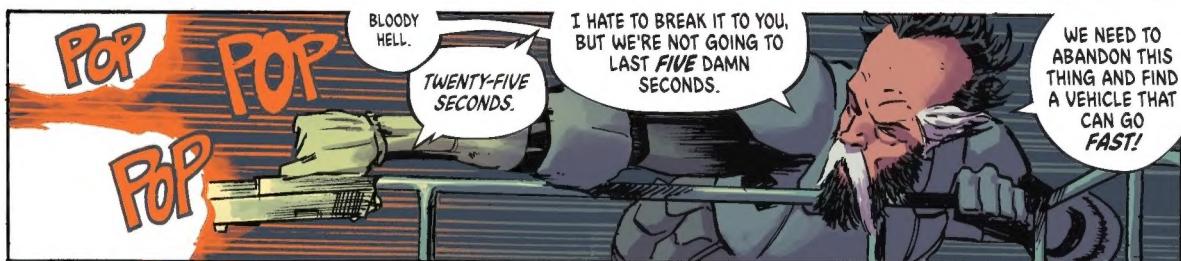


THOOM



SURF

BOOM



BLOODY HELL.

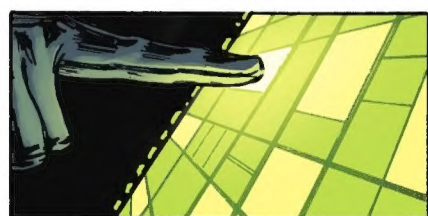
TWENTY-FIVE SECONDS.

I HATE TO BREAK IT TO YOU, BUT WE'RE NOT GOING TO LAST *FIVE* DAMN SECONDS.

WE NEED TO ABANDON THIS THING AND FIND A VEHICLE THAT CAN GO *FAST*!



I'LL PRETEND YOU DIDN'T SAY THAT.



There's a sudden screech of hydraulics.



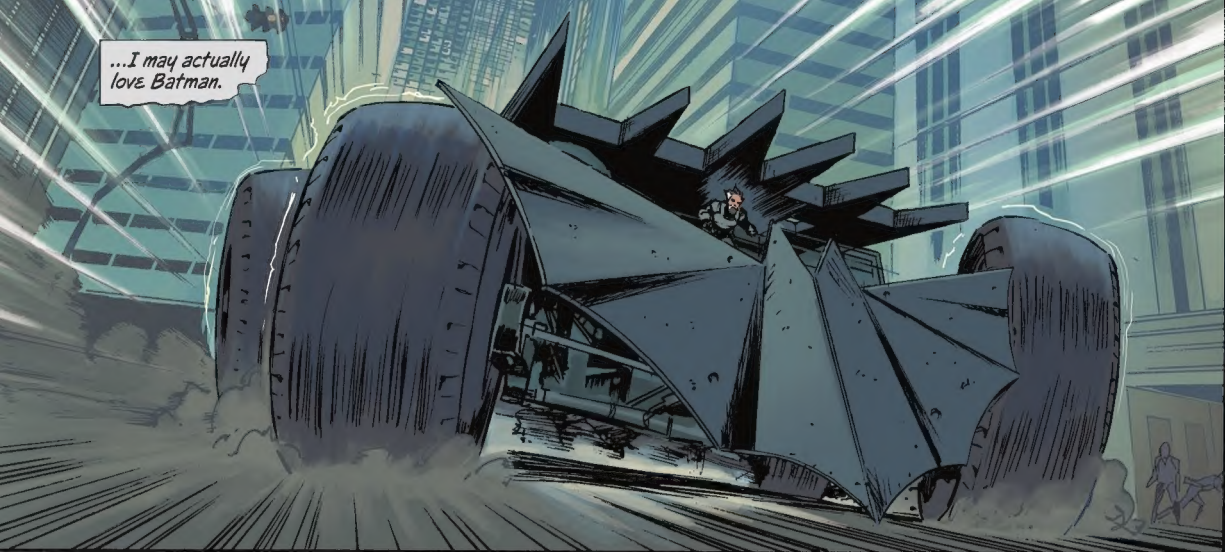
The rumble of six hundred tons of steel shifting on its chassis.

LTK
CHOM



The roof almost takes off my head, but all I can think is...

...I may actually
love Batman.



YOU HAVE TWENTY
SECONDS.

IF YOU
MANAGE TO
HOLD ON.



The sweet smell of kerosene burns my nose as we rocket
forward. Homemade jet engines. Ever the builder, this one.

LISTEN
TO ME,
DAMMIT!



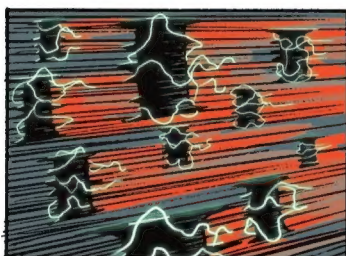
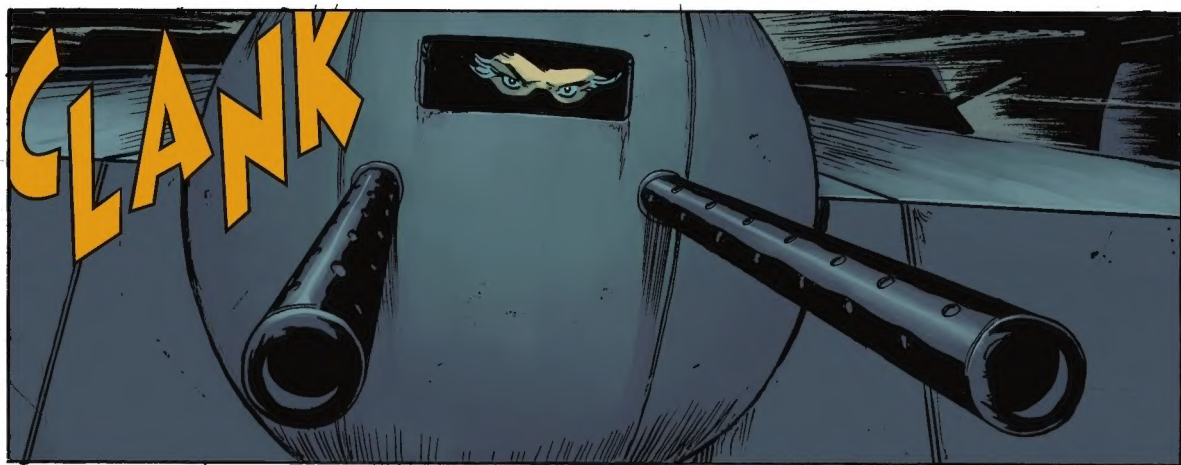
I CAN
HELP
YOU!



SO CLOSE
THE HATCH AND
PROVE IT.

FIFTEEN
SECONDS.





BUT HE OFFERED YOU A *DEAL* BACK THERE. I *HEARD* HIM! THAT MEANS HE'S READY TO *COMPROMISE*.

MY GUESS IS, WHATEVER HE HAS BEEN TRYING TO ACHIEVE WITH THESE ATTACKS ON GOTHAM, IT'S ALMOST DONE.

WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?



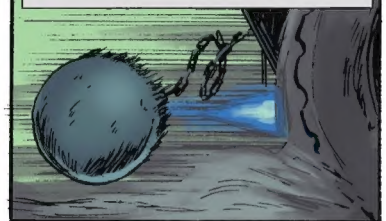
I'M SAYING YOU *MEET HIM*, AGREE TO STEP DOWN YOUR FIGHT. I'LL BET HE'LL LOWER THE ATTACKS ON GOTHAM TO ALMOST NOTHING. MAYBE EVEN STOP THEM. YOU GET TO BE THE HERO.



BY QUITTING?
FORGET IT.



"BY SAVING LIVES THROUGH DIPLOMACY. BY BEING A *##%* & GROWN UP! AND IF THAT'S NOT ENOUGH..."



"...BLACK MASK SERVES SOME OF THE RICHEST GLOBAL PLUTOCRATS. THIS OFFER, IT'S PROBABLY FOR A HUNDRED MILLION, MORE..."

"YOU TAKE IT, YOU CAN SET BATMAN UP AS SOMETHING *REAL* HERE."



"SOMETHING WITH *IMPACT*."



AND WHAT'S IN THIS FOR YOU?



"FOR SIONIS TO MAKE THE DEAL, HE'LL NEED TO MAKE TRANSACTIONS THAT WILL LIKELY GIVE MY PEOPLE ALL THEY NEED ON HIM."



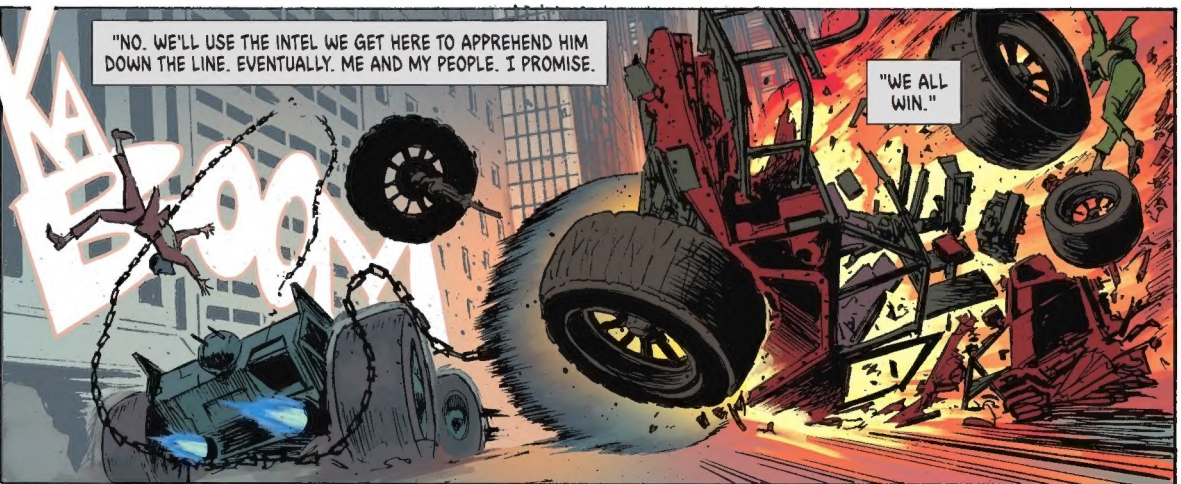
"SO *ME?* I GET TO LEAVE THIS CITY. AND *YOU* GET TO BUILD BATMAN BIG."



"*REALLY* BIG."



AND SIONIS JUST GETS AWAY?



"NO. WE'LL USE THE INTEL WE GET HERE TO APPREHEND HIM DOWN THE LINE. EVENTUALLY. ME AND MY PEOPLE. I PROMISE."

"WE ALL WIN."



Behind us, the sirens grow loud.

But I note that he has stopped his blasted countdown. He's hearing me, finally. He's listening, thank God.



THIS IS COMMISSIONER HARVEY BULLOCK! YOU WILL EXIT THE VEHICLE NOW!



YOU AND WHOEVER ELSE YOU GOT IN THERE! YOU HEAR ME?!



THERE'S NOWHERE LEFT TO GO. IT'S OVER!



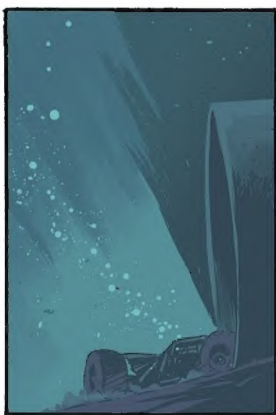
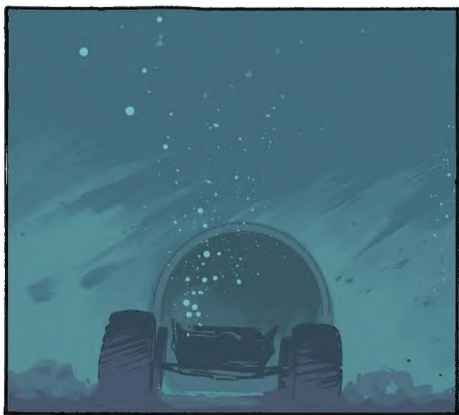
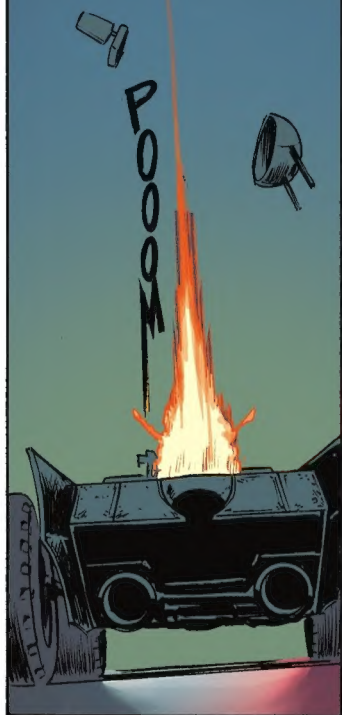
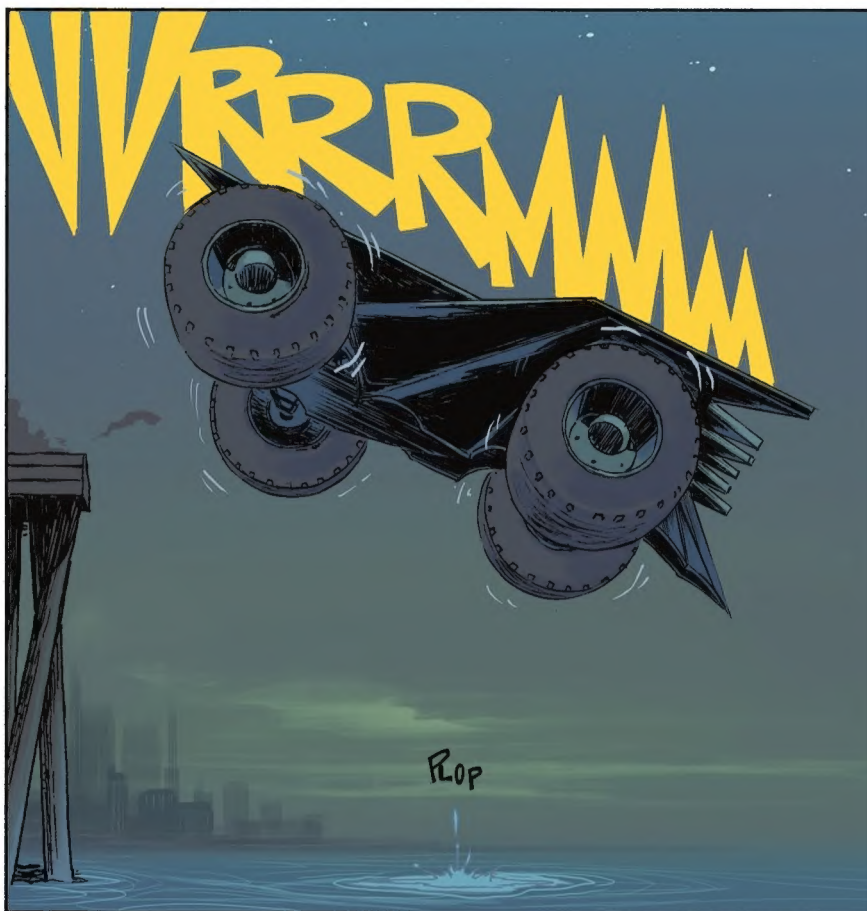
WE MAKE A DECENT TEAM, KID. TELL ME YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO GET US OUT OF THIS ONE AND LET'S KEEP IT GOING.

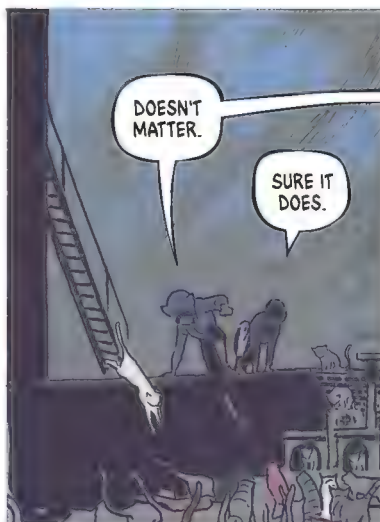


THE LEVER IN FRONT OF YOU.



ALL RIGHT TH--









I CAME TO TALK TO *YOU*, MAN.



AH, BUT HE *IS* ME. AND YOU. AND EVERYONE. HE CONTAINS ABOUT FOUR-FIFTHS OF ALL HUMAN KNOWLEDGE AND COUNTING... SO GO ON!

DOES HE HAVE A NAME?

I WAS THINKING "AL," AFTER ALAN TURING. THE LIBRARY OF ALEXANDRIA, AND AS A VISUAL PLAY ON A.I., OF COURSE. BUT NOW I'M JUST THINKING SOMETHING WITH RIDDLES? RIDDLE-MAN? BECAUSE THE GREAT RIDDLE OF HUMANITY IS HOW TO LIVE FOREVER, AM I RIGHT? AND WE ALL EXIST INSIDE THIS DUDE. BUT I DIGRESS. GO, GO, GO.

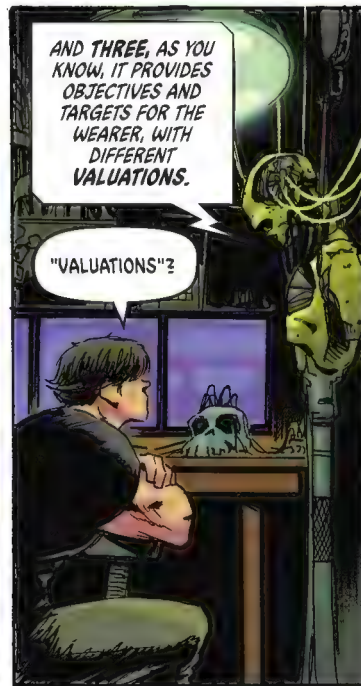


SIGH YO, AL. HOW DO THE PARTY ANIMALS' APE SKULLS WORK?



WELL, BRUCE, THE MASK HAS **THREE** FUNCTIONS. **ONE**, IT COMPLETELY OBFUSCATES THE WEARER'S IDENTITY FROM ALL GLOBAL OR LOCAL DECIPHERING MEANS.

TWO, IT CREATES A WALLET FOR THE WEARER CONNECTED TO A HIGHLY PROTECTED PRIVATE NETWORK OF CRYPTOCURRENCY CALLED THE **BLACK COIN**.



AND **THREE**, AS YOU KNOW, IT PROVIDES OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS FOR THE WEARER, WITH DIFFERENT VALUATIONS.

"VALUATIONS"?



ARSON, ROBBERY, MURDER... EACH HAS A DIFFERENT VALUE IN BLACK COIN. BUT WE'RE TALKING TENS AND HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS. MEMBERS CAN GET QUITE WEALTHY QUITE FAST.

HOW WOULD SOMEONE DISRUPT IT? THIS NETWORK.



THE NETWORK IS FAR TOO EXPANSIVE FOR ANYONE TO BRING DOWN.



YOU COULD TAKE OUT A LOCAL SERVER, BUT THE NETWORK IS SATELLITE BASED. THERE ARE DEPOSITS OF THESE MASKS ALL OVER THE WORLD.



HUNDREDS. MAYBE THOUSANDS OF MEMBERS.

THERE HAS TO BE SOME WAY.

THERE IS NOT.

BUT SEE, YOU DON'T ACTUALLY KNOW EVERYTHING, AL. EDDIE?



JUST DESTROY THE MASK AND FORGET IT.

COME ON--

HE DOESN'T WANT TO HELP YOU, BRUCE, EVEN IF HE COULD.



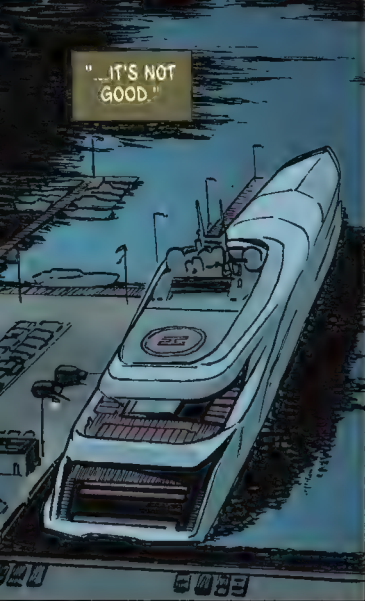
I MAY NOT KNOW EVERYTHING, BUT I KNOW THAT MUCH.

WHY, I'M JUST ASKING QUESTIONS.



YOU KNOW WHAT THE OLDEST KNOWN RIDDLE IS, BRUCE?





"...IT'S NOT GOOD."



WELCOME, WELCOME!

I APPRECIATE YOU AGREEING TO MEET ME.



YOU'RE NOT GETTING MY ENDORSEMENT, HILL. IF THAT'S WHY YOU INVITED ME HERE, YOU CAN FORGET IT. JIM AND I--

WHOA, WHOA! SLOW DOWN, COMMISSIONER. I'M NOT TRYING TO STEAL YOU AWAY FROM OLD JIMMY. I JUST WANTED TO THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO...



...AND TO INTRODUCE YOU TO A FRIEND OF MINE.

DR. BENJAMIN, PERMISSION TO COME ABOARD? IS HE AVAILABLE?



HE'S IN THE BODY ROOM.

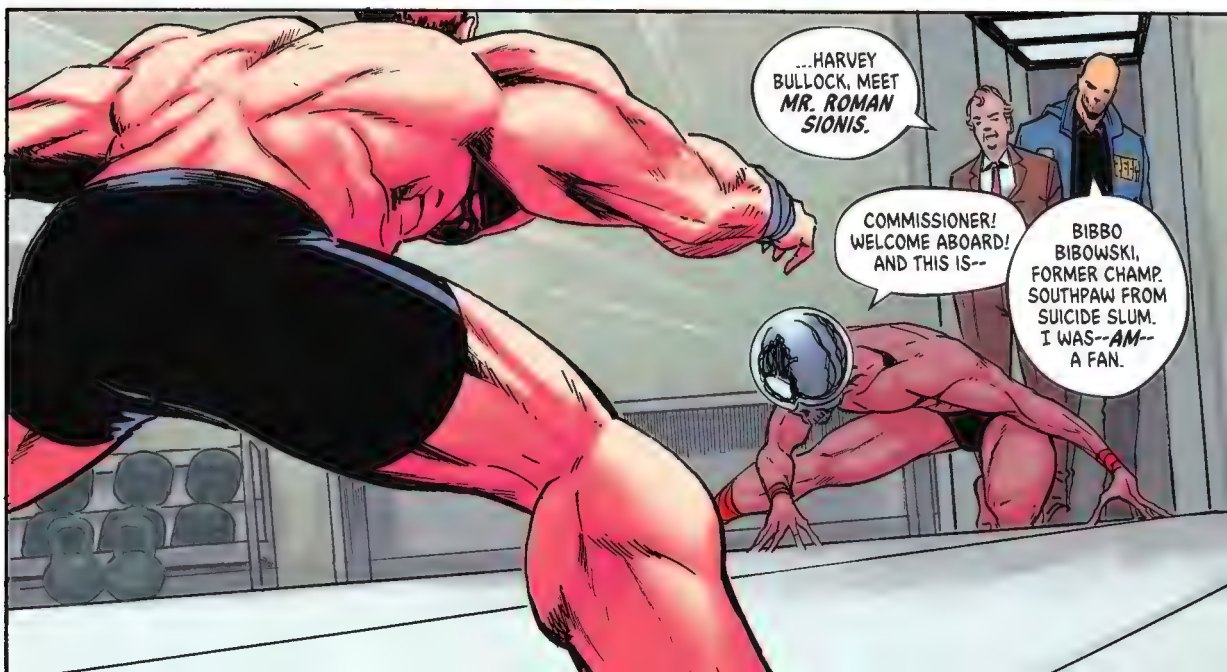


WOW. COOL SHADES.



HILL, I CAME BECAUSE YOU SAID YOU COULD HELP US.

I CAN. THROUGH HIM...



...HARVEY BULLOCK, MEET MR. ROMAN SIONIS.

COMMISSIONER! WELCOME ABOARD! AND THIS IS--

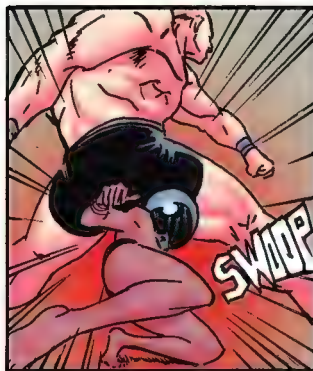
BIBBO BIBOWSKI, FORMER CHAMP. SOUTHPAW FROM SUICIDE SLUM. I WAS--AM-- A FAN.



EVEN BETTER! NOW PLEASE, MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME!



THANKS. SO... WHAT'S WITH THE MASK?



SWAP!



OH, IT'S JUST FOR ANONYMITY, COMMISSIONER.

I HAVE A LOT OF ENEMIES IN MY LINE OF WORK.

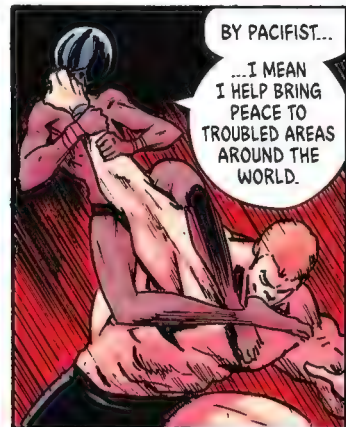


AND WHAT LINE IS THAT?

I'M A PROFESSIONAL PACIFIST.

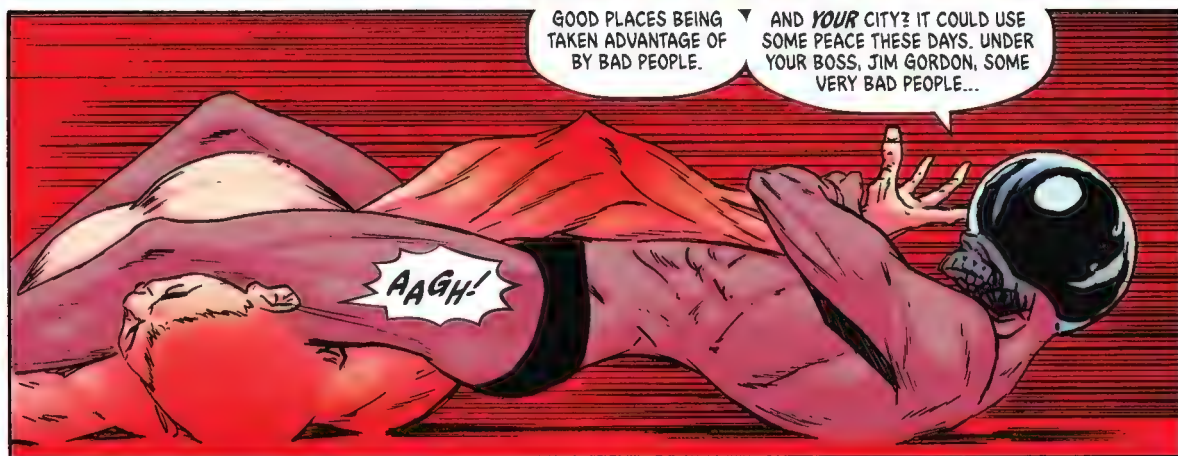


'COURSE. I MEAN, LOOK AT YOU.



BY PACIFIST...

I MEAN I HELP BRING PEACE TO TROUBLED AREAS AROUND THE WORLD.



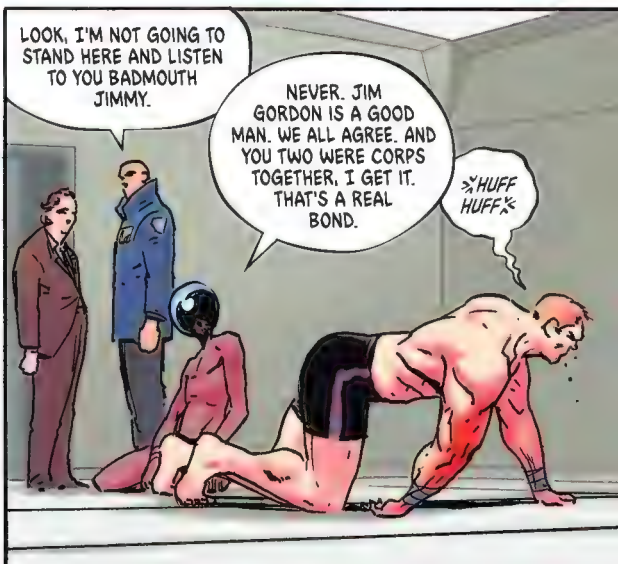
GOOD PLACES BEING TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF BY BAD PEOPLE.

AND YOUR CITY? IT COULD USE SOME PEACE THESE DAYS. UNDER YOUR BOSS, JIM GORDON, SOME VERY BAD PEOPLE...

AAGH!



...THEY'RE TEARING GOTHAM APART.



LOOK, I'M NOT GOING TO STAND HERE AND LISTEN TO YOU BADMOUTH JIMMY.

NEVER. JIM GORDON IS A GOOD MAN. WE ALL AGREE. AND YOU TWO WERE CORPS TOGETHER, I GET IT. THAT'S A REAL BOND.

%%HUFF HUFF%%



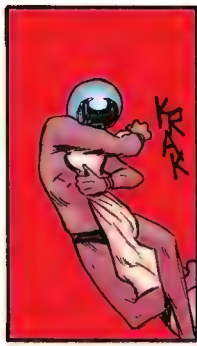
BUT THE FACT IS, THE PARTY ANIMALS ARE #\$\$%& DEGENERATES. YOUNG, GODLESS, BELIEVING IN NOTHING.



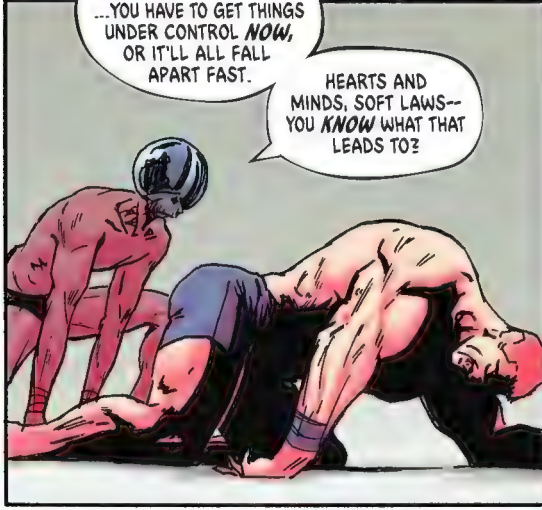
THEY'RE FILTH.



NO ARGUMENT HERE.



AND THEY'RE GROWING IN NUMBER. BETWEEN THEM AND THIS BATMAN...



...YOU HAVE TO GET THINGS UNDER CONTROL **NOW**, OR IT'LL ALL FALL APART FAST.

HEARTS AND MINDS. SOFT LAWS-- YOU **KNOW** WHAT THAT LEADS TO?



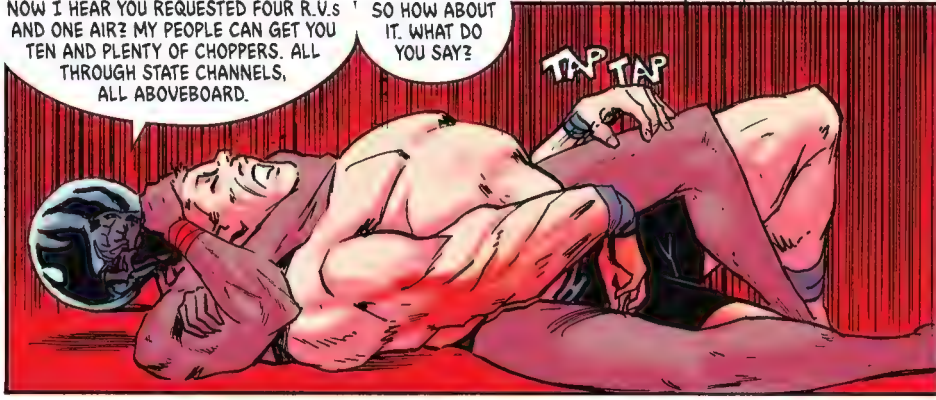
WAR.



BINGO. I'VE SEEN IT HAPPEN IN CITIES ALL OVER THE WORLD. HELL, I GREW UP IN ONE.

NOW I HEAR YOU REQUESTED FOUR R.V.s AND ONE AIR? MY PEOPLE CAN GET YOU TEN AND PLENTY OF CHOPPERS. ALL THROUGH STATE CHANNELS, ALL ABOVEBOARD.

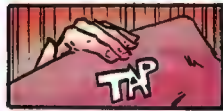
SO HOW ABOUT IT. WHAT DO YOU SAY?



TAP TAP



TAP



TAP



ALL RIGHT, MAN! HE'S HAD ENOUGH! @#%&!



IS HE...



NO! DON'T WORRY ABOUT HIM, COMMISSIONER. HE'LL BE FINE.

NOW, COME. LET'S TALK ABOUT PEACE.

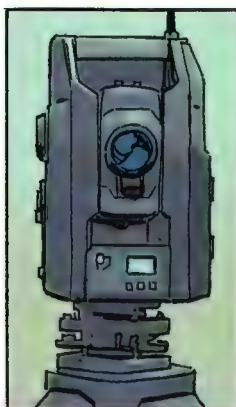
Your eyes open yet, Bruce?
You starting to see
the pieces?

They call them "Arks,"
these black sites.



Secret, unregulated
prisons run in conjunction
with other governments
around the world.

Ark A was the first, the prototype
in Santa Prisca. Ark B is in Russia.
Ark C is China.



THE
HELL...



Wherever you are, I hope it's
finally coming into focus.



Ark M, the biggest yet,
is planned for Gotham.

Look at it,
Bruce.



Look at what
you're up
against.

And all you
could lose...

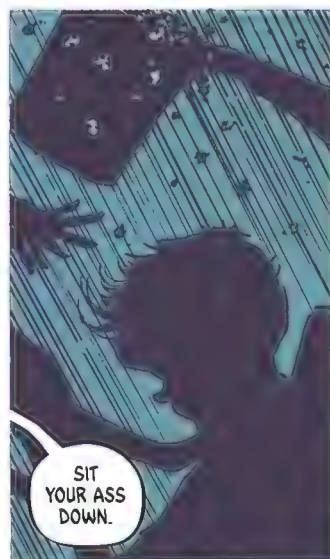




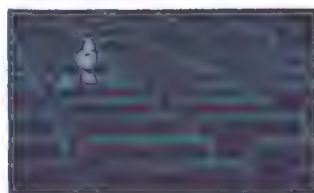
THAT DAY. YOU REMEMBER THE **JOKE** YOU MADE TO YOUR DAD, ABOUT THE LION? HOW THE LION HAD IT MADE AT THE ZOO?



WELL, THIS IS YOUR **CHANCE** TO MEAN SOMETHING, BRUCE. YOU'VE GOT TALENTS OTHER KIDS DON'T HAVE. AND YES, IT'S SCARY AND DANGEROUS AND NEW, BUT YOU NEED TO BLOCK THAT OUT AND GO RIGHT AT IT. CAT EYES...



WE'RE **ALL** WATCHING THIS BORING-ASS MOVIE TOGETHER. BEGINNING TO END.





MORNING, MOM.



BRUCE?! YOU SCARED ME.

WHAT IS IT, HONEY? WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?

NOTHING. I WAS JUST IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD AND FIGURED...



FIGURED YOU'D DROP BY AND MAKE **SOUP** AT EIGHT IN THE MORNING?



DON'T GET ME WRONG, NOTHING MAKES ME HAPPIER THAN FINDING YOU IN THIS KITCHEN. BUT I KNOW YOU. I KNOW THAT FACE. WHAT IS IT?



I JUST... I WAS THINKING MAYBE WITH ALL THE CHAOS IN THE CITY LATELY, MAYBE YOU COULD KIND OF, I DON'T KNOW... **LIE LOW?**



THE CHAOS IS EXACTLY WHY I **CAN'T** LIE LOW, BRUCE. IN FACT...



...I'M STEPPING IN AS JIM'S **DEPUTY MAYOR**. I'M ON MY WAY TO THE OFFICIAL PRESS EVENT RIGHT NOW.

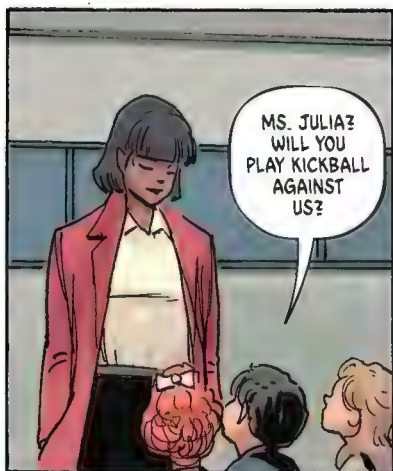


DEPUTY MAYOR?! MOM, **WHY** WOULD YOU DO THAT? THE PARTY ANIMALS KEEP TARGETING OFFICIALS. STEPPING UP ATTACKS. YOU'RE PUTTING A **BULLSEYE** ON YOURSELF.





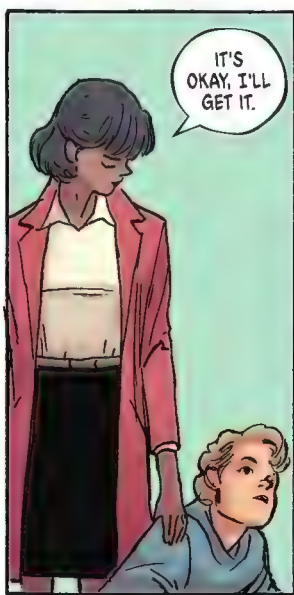
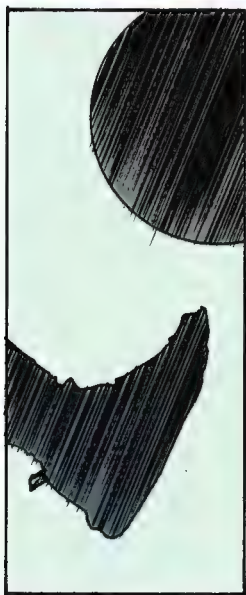
You can't protect them. It doesn't matter how brave you are. Or how skilled you are. Or how right you are.



MS. JULIA? WILL YOU PLAY KICKBALL AGAINST US?

ME? AGAINST THE SIX OF YOU? THAT WOULDN'T BE FAIR.

FOR YOU GUYS...



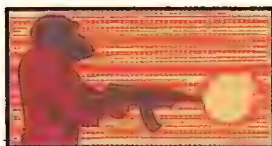
IT'S OKAY, I'LL GET IT.



There's only one thing you can do to keep them safe...



...And that's accept it.



Look around, past your fists, at all the people who'll get hurt. Look up past the towers, the satellites, at the forces at work. A whole sky tilted against you. And then look down past your feet, at how far you could fall...

...and do the only good thing you can.



--PARTY ANIMALS TERRORIZE IN BROAD--



--MAYOR GORDON, STILL HOSPITALIZED, TELLS PEOPLE TO RESIST FEAR--



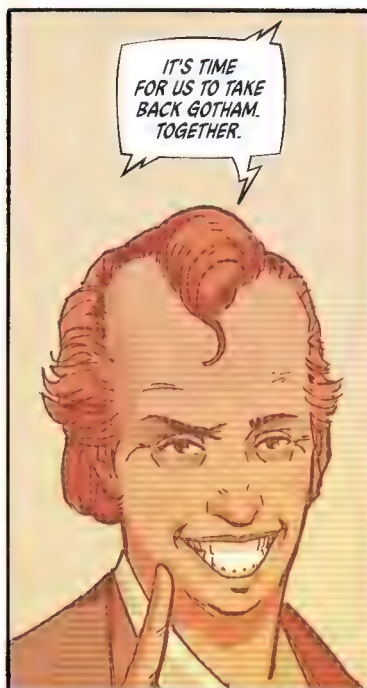
GORDON'S VISION HAS FAILED YOU.

FAILED THIS CITY.



I'M PROUD TO HAVE THE ENDORSEMENT OF COMMISSIONER BULLOCK AND THE G.C.P.D.

CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP



IT'S TIME FOR US TO TAKE BACK GOTHAM TOGETHER.



TOMORROW MARKS THE ANNIVERSARY OF ONE OF THE MOST VIOLENT DAYS IN CITY HISTORY: THE GOTHAM ZOO SHOOTING.

I PROPOSE THAT THIS YEAR, FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE TRAGEDY, WE DO NOT TURN ON THE MEMORIAL LIGHT. IT WOULD BE A MOCKERY TO SEE IT BRIGHTEN THE SKY WITH BLOOD RUNNING IN OUR STREETS!



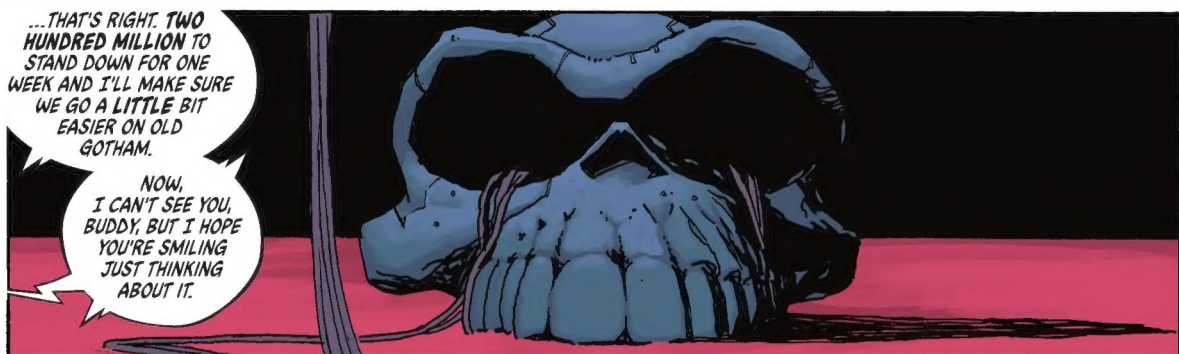
AND AMIDST ALL THIS, PEOPLE ARE WONDERING-- WHERE IS THE BATMAN?

HOW WILL HE RESPOND?



...THAT'S RIGHT. TWO HUNDRED MILLION TO STAND DOWN FOR ONE WEEK AND I'LL MAKE SURE WE GO A LITTLE BIT EASIER ON OLD GOTHAM.

NOW, I CAN'T SEE YOU, BUDDY, BUT I HOPE YOU'RE SMILING JUST THINKING ABOUT IT.



THINKING ABOUT ALL OF THE GOOD BATMAN COULD DO WITH THAT KIND OF MONEY.



THE CARS.
THE WEAPONS.
THE TECH.



HE'LL BE SOMETHING LARGER THAN LIFE. SOMETHING EPIC. BATMAN WILL--



ENOUGH.



I'LL TAKE THE DEAL.



TO BE CONTINUED...

DC FINEST

ESSENTIAL DC STORIES ACROSS THE ERAS!

Comprehensive, 500+-page collections featuring key moments in the adventures of the greatest characters in comics—for only \$39.99!



**DC FINEST: WONDER WOMAN:
ORIGINS & OMENS**

AVAILABLE NOW



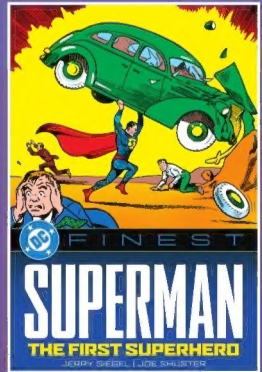
**DC FINEST: BATMAN:
YEAR ONE & TWO**

AVAILABLE NOW



**DC FINEST: THE FLASH:
THE HUMAN THUNDERBOLT**

AVAILABLE NOW



**DC FINEST: SUPERMAN:
THE FIRST SUPERHERO**

AVAILABLE NOW



© & TM DC.

BUILD YOUR DC FINEST LIBRARY!

**JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA:
THE BRIDGE BETWEEN EARTHS**
AVAILABLE NOW

**AQUAMAN:
THE KING OF ATLANTIS**
JANUARY 2025

**JUSTICE SOCIETY OF AMERICA:
FOR AMERICA AND DEMOCRACY**
DECEMBER

**SUPergirl:
THE GIRL OF STEEL**
JANUARY 2025

**GREEN LANTERN:
THE DEFEAT OF GREEN LANTERN**
DECEMBER

**GREEN ARROW:
THE LONGBOW HUNTERS**
JANUARY 2025

**EVENTS:
ZERO HOUR PART 1**
DECEMBER

**DOOM PATROL:
THE WORLD'S STRANGEST HEROES**
FEBRUARY 2025

**LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES:
ZAP GOES THE LEGION**
DECEMBER

**TEEN TITANS:
THE JUDAS CONTRACT**
FEBRUARY 2025

**CATWOMAN:
LIFE LINES**
DECEMBER

**HARLEY QUINN:
BIRTH OF THE MIRTH**
FEBRUARY 2025



DC's Batman Smells, Robin Laid an Egg
variant cover by Santa Fung

 **NATION HOLIDAY EDITION**

HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM DC!

DC COMICS MARIE JAVINS VP - Editor-in-Chief JIM LEE President, Publisher & Chief Creative Officer ANNE DePIES Senior VP & General Manager LARRY BERRY VP - Brand Design & Creative Services DON FALLETI VP - Manufacturing & Production LAWRENCE GANEM VP - Editorial Programming & Talent Strategy NICK J. NAPOLITANO VP - Publishing & Business Operations NANCY SPEARS VP - Sales & Marketing

ABSOLUTE BATMAN 3, February, 2025. Published monthly by DC Comics, 4000 Warner Blvd., Bldg. 700, 2nd Floor, Burbank, CA 91522. GST # is R125921072. Copyright © 2024 DC Comics. All Rights Reserved. All characters featured in this issue, the distinctive likenesses thereof, and related elements are trademarks of DC Comics. The stories, characters, and incidents mentioned in this magazine are entirely fictional. DC Comics does not read or accept unsolicited submissions of ideas, stories, or artwork. For Advertising and Custom Publishing contact dccomicsadvertising@dc.com. For details on DC Comics Ratings, visit dc.com/ratings.

The Last Kryptonian-DCP

